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38p Thursday, July 16th, 2009

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You let gipsies on to my land

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**Council workers
left a gate open**

■ By JOE LANE

AN ANGRY farmer has condemned Gloucestershire County Council for allowing a band of gipsies to pitch up on his field in Cheltenham.

A group of 20 gipsies have moved on to the former rugby pitch at Starvehall Farm in Prestbury - transforming it into a makeshift campsite with a cluster of caravans.

Farmer Peter Newth, who rents the land from the county council, is furious and blames council workers for leaving the gates to the field open.

The 50-year-old says workmen have been using the Prestbury Road entrance as an access route to lay drainage pipes to prevent flooding in the next field. But

► turn to page 2

■ GET RID: farmer Peter Newth
says an unlocked gate
allowed gipsies to get on to
his land

Government
calls GCHQ
world class
- new report

A GOVERNMENT report has hailed GCHQ as world class as part of its assessment of civil service organisations.

The Cabinet Office has published its first capability review of the intelligence organisation based in Cheltenham.

Staff at the Doughnut in Benhall are praised in the report.

But it says senior management should become more visible to both staff and GCHQ's customers and need to work together better to drive the changes needed to meet challenges like technological changes.

■ Full story, p2

**Brand litter?
It's a Coke!**

LITTER campaigner Tim Barnes is urging big businesses to crack down on branded rubbish ruining the countryside.

The 48-year-old, from Whaddon, has compiled a survey highlighting the impact of litter on rural lanes.

And he says empty Coca-Cola and Red Bull cans, and McDonald's wrappers are the biggest culprits.

■ Full story, p3

**Chiropractor
is banned**

CHIROPRACTOR Nick Hall has been banned from practising after he embarked on an affair with a patient.

Mr Hall, who ran the Cotswold Chiropractic Clinic at Huxley Court in South Cerney, was found guilty of "unacceptable professional conduct" by a hearing of his peers after the affair between January 2007 and January 2009.

■ Full story, p2

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WI tour Jackdaws Castle, p20

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Council let gipsies on to my land

from page 1

they haven't been shutting the gates, which are usually locked, behind them.

Mr Newth, who has lived in Prestbury for more than 35 years, said: "I warned the council to keep the gates shut because this might happen."

"I'm far from happy about it. Those gypsies are trampling all over the field and spoiling grass which could be used for hay."

"We don't want them here. I've told them if they don't get off the land by Sunday, I'll dig a trench around them to trap them in."

Mr Newth says that he warned the county council after he saw the gate in Prestbury Road had been left open one morning.

"It's sheer incompetence," he added. "The gate was left wide open all morning on Tuesday and despite me contacting the council to warn them, no one bothered to do anything about it."

"Then sure enough the gypsies arrived at about 2.30pm that day and we'll be lucky to get rid of them soon."

"But any damage caused while they are here should be charged back to the council. It was their workers who allowed this to happen."

The gypsies, who describe themselves as reborn Christians, say they will stay as long as they are welcome.

A spokesman for the group, who wanted to remain anonymous, said: "We are traditional gypsies – not thieves or new-age travellers."

"We saw the land wasn't being used for anything so thought it would be a good spot for us."

"We don't want any trouble. We are clean-living people, and we don't do any fly-tipping."

"All we ask is that the council supports us by helping dispose of our rubbish."

Prestbury parish councillors last week called for the field at Starvehall Farm to be used for sports because Prestbury Playing Fields were



oversubscribed. They said the field had been unattended since 2001 and was overgrown and tangled.

A spokeswoman for Gloucestershire County Council said: "We are aware that a group of travellers entered the field yesterday lunchtime through our site access gate in Prestbury Road."

"The gate was closed but not locked because it's constantly in use while we are installing a new culvert on the land."

"Our highways teams are currently working closely with our traveller services officer, who will be talking to the group and discussing their future plans."

"At the moment we understand they are planning on staying on the site until Sunday and as soon as they have left we will ensure the gate is locked."

Beth Boughton, acting operations manager at Cheltenham Borough Council said she would arrange for a member of staff to visit the site to inform the travellers of how to present their waste for collection.

Gloucestershire police confirmed that local safer community officers had been to talk with the gypsies about their plans, but said they would only intervene if there was a breach of the peace.



Chiropractor has licence removed

He had a two year romance with a patient

■ By ALED THOMAS

A CHIROPRACTOR has been struck off for having an affair with a patient.

Nick Hall, who ran the Cotswold Chiropractic Clinic at Huxley Court in South Cerney, has been banned from practising by the General Chiropractic Council after a three-day hearing.

The hearing found that Hall had an inappropriate sexual relationship with a female patient for nearly two years between January 2007 and January 2009.

The GCC's professional conduct committee found Mr Hall guilty of "unacceptable professional conduct" and his name has been removed from the register of chiropractors.

Chairman Paul Moulder said Hall (right) was guilty of abusing the trust of a vulnerable patient.

He said: "Mr Hall told the committee he was not

as emotionally involved in the relationship as Patient A had been. His lack of insight into the harm he caused her and his reluctant apology struck the committee as displaying an appalling attitude to the welfare of Patient A and to Mr Hall's responsibilities."

"The committee is firmly of the view that the behaviour demonstrated in this case is fundamentally incompatible with continuing to be registered as a chiropractor. This is a serious case of misconduct over an extended period involving real consequent harm to a patient in the care of a healthcare professional."

The committee criticised Hall for deliberately developing an empathetic relationship with the patient.

Mr Moulder added: "The abuse occurred on numerous occasions over a significant period."

"Mr Hall was at all times in control of the relationship. He was the professional healthcare provider and Patient A was his patient."

"The committee had evidence before it of serious harm having been caused to Patient A."

"The conduct involved a significant abuse of position and breach of trust involving a vulnerable patient."

Mr Hall has 28 days to appeal. The Cotswold Chiropractic Clinic's website now says: "As of March 5, 2009 this practice has been closed."

Mr Hall, 60, qualified as a chiropractor with a diploma from the McTimoney College in Abingdon in 2002.

He was unavailable for comment yesterday.



Fire control centre move is delayed until 2011

THE proposed move of the county's fire control centre to Taunton has been delayed until at least 2011 because of "technical problems", it was announced yesterday.

The Fire Brigades' Union said there would be a 10-month delay, adding that no fire service would move to the new system until May 2011 at the earliest.

The Government had pledged to have the new control system in England in place by 2007 at a cost of £100 million, but this has spiralled to £1.4 billion, said the union.

General secretary Matt Wrack said: "This is the latest Government IT disaster in a long line of IT disasters. This is a scandalous waste of public money when fire brigades are looking to make major cuts because of a lack of cash."

Fire minister Shahid Malik said the Government remained "strongly committed" to the project, adding that it would improve firefighter safety and the efficiency of the fire service."

Fire and rescue services in England will now start to change

over to the new control centres in the spring of 2011 and finish by the end of 2012, he said.

Under the new system all 46 brigade emergency fire controls in England will be closed and replaced by a national network of nine region-wide control centres.

A total of 72 MPs from various parties have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the project to be halted.

The new call centre in Taunton would see 155 experienced fire control centre operators in the

South West replaced with just 63 call centre staff.

Coun Will Windsor-Clive, Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet member for community safety, said the delay would waste even more money.

He said: "Labour is wasting a fortune on this crazy scheme. Any further delay will push the bill up even more."

"Labour's plan has wasted millions and if ever implemented, would put people in Gloucestershire at risk – they should scrap it now."